



BORDEN GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Borden Grammar School
Avenue of Remembrance
Sittingbourne
ME10 4DB

22 March 2023

Dear Parents/Carers

RE: School Therapy Dog

The value of pet 'therapy' is widely accepted as a powerful aid to stimulation and communication. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier, more enjoyable and less overwhelming. In my personal research at my last school, we found that students' attendance drastically increased due to interaction with our dog. Therapy dogs have been found to:

- Decrease distress and increase comfort
- Have a positive effect on students' mood and anxiety
- Improve literacy skills and confidence when read to
- Improve outcomes by improving student wellbeing
- Promote engagement in school (and therefore attendance).

For further information, this article gives a clear breakdown of the benefits of therapy dogs in schools, alongside links to wider research:

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fvets.2021.655104/full>



With this in mind, we have the opportunity to introduce a therapy dog to Borden. Hazy lives with me, and has received extensive training, including up to Kennel Club Gold Good Citizen award. She has also trained and competed in Sporting Agility for 4 years.

Hazy will be starting with the school after the Easter holidays. To begin with, she will be in school on a Monday to allow her to acclimatise to the environment, and allow us to assess the effectiveness of her presence in school.

She will be taking part in interventions, such as supporting students who are anxious about attending school and those who need to build confidence.

She has been assessed independently by the charity Canine Concern (Registered Charity Number 1177334 CIO), and secondary age students were involved in this assessment. Clear guidelines are shared with all Canine Concern members on ensuring the welfare of both the dog, the handler and the individuals being visited. Hazy is vaccinated in line with veterinary guidelines and regular health checks are completed by a vet. She has 3rd Party Liability insured by Canine Concern (CICC01CZ01) and a risk assessment is in place.



Headteacher: Mr A Tomlin MA NPQH



If you have any concerns, please feel free to contact Miss Powell. If you do not want your child to interact with Hazy when she is in school, please complete the Google Form below by the 30th March 2023 and this will be logged on our system; we will then be in touch regarding further details about this. After this date, you can contact the office at any point to opt out.

[Therapy Dog Opt-Out Form](#)

We hope that Hazy will have a positive influence on our students, and we look forward to welcoming her.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R Powell .". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Miss R Powell
Assistant Headteacher (KS4)